

BRITISH COLUMBIA JURISDICTIONAL REPORT

*to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
for the period April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009 (submitted March 2009)*

This report is a summary of projects and activities completed by the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer during the period April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009. Its purpose is to inform the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) of the steps taken in British Columbia to improve student mobility and credit transfer in accordance with the principles stipulated in CMEC's Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada (October 9, 2002).

1. Overview

The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) was established by the Provincial government in 1989. Its mandate is to facilitate admission, articulation, and transfer arrangements among BC post-secondary institutions. Specifically, the Council (a) encourages institutions to develop policies and practices regarding the transferability of post-secondary credit courses so that credit granted at one institution can be applied toward credentials at other institutions, and (b) examines issues concerning capacity, demand, and student mobility, and recommends policies and practices related to the admission process for direct entry and transfer students. The Council has no legislative or regulatory authority and is funded annually by the Ministry responsible for post-secondary institutions.

Council members are selected from the education system and appointed by the Minister. They strive to achieve the mandate of the Council by serving the overall best interests of the system and do not formally represent any specific institution or constituency with which they are affiliated. The Council carries out its work with the assistance of a number of standing committees, whose members are drawn from the post-secondary system: Transfer and Articulation Committee, Admissions Committee, Institutional Contact Persons Committee, Research Committee, and Education Planner Advisory Committee. Advisory and task-specific groups are established as needed. More information about the comprehensive work undertaken by BCCAT can be obtained on its three websites, bccat.ca, bctransferguide.ca, and educationplanner.ca. [For information on the roles and responsibilities of the Council, see bccat.ca/pubs/activities.pdf.]

2. Communication/Adoption of Ministerial Principles

The BCCAT Principles and Guidelines for Transfer are consistent with the CMEC principles on credit transfer. They have been in effect in BC since 1975 (although modified over time) and have formed the basis for all credit transfer arrangements in the BC Transfer System. They are available online at bccat.ca/articulation/principles.cfm.

3. Projects & Activities Completed in 2008-09

Each year the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) prepares a detailed work plan and at the end of the fiscal year prepares an Annual Report that summarizes what was achieved. Each annual report includes reference to completed research reports, newsletters, and related publications.¹

The following summary outlines key projects and activities undertaken by the Council in 2008-09. This information will be presented in detail in the 2008-09 Annual Report which is due for publication in April 2009, and will be posted to the BCCAT website (at bccat.ca/publications) at that time.

¹ Annual reports and other BCCAT publications are available on the BCCAT website at bccat.ca/publications. For a comprehensive review of the projects and activities carried out in 2007-08, see the 07-08 Annual Report, at bccat.ca/pubs/ar07-08.pdf.

A. Transfer & Articulation Projects

This year, BCCAT implemented a number of recommendations arising from a recent province-wide consultation which focused on the subject, *Recalibrating the BC Transfer System*. The following projects are three examples of these implementations:

- **Designation as a Receiving Institution in the BC Transfer System**

Based on feedback from the *Recalibration* consultation, BCCAT developed a policy establishing a structure and process for institutions, currently designated as “sending-only,” seeking to operate in the BC Transfer System as “receiving” institutions. See bccat.ca/pubs/receivingpolicy.pdf for details.

- **Beyond Course-to-Course Transfer**

This year, BCCAT carried out a study to examine how courses are moving through the system as students switch institutions, to help identify whether certain institutions have a case for taking on the “receiver” designation.

Research report: bccat.ca/pubs/coursescarried.pdf

4-page summary: bccat.ca/pubs/rr_coursescarried08.pdf

- **Best Practice Guide: A Resource for Receiving Institutions**

The *Recalibration* discussions clarified that BCCAT could provide a vital service to the system by developing a resource offering information on the best practices, processes, policies and means required of receiving institutions to operate in the transfer system.

In response to this recommendation, BCCAT prepared a handbook for use as a guide by institutions seeking the “receiver” designation. The *Best Practice Guide* was released in conjunction with the Designation Policy. PDF and HTML versions of the handbook are available on the BCCAT website at bccat.ca/articulation/receiving.

Also, this year, the Transfer & Articulation Committee (TAC) oversaw a major revision to the policy governing how new institutions join in the BC Transfer System, *Policy for New Members of the Transfer System* (bccat.ca/pubs/newmember.pdf). In addition, the TAC developed a new policy, *Recording Block Transfer Agreements with PCTIA-Accredited Private Institutions* (bccat.ca/pubs/PCTIAblock.pdf).

B. Admissions & Research Projects

The following items summarize advances made in admissions research, under the supervision of the Admissions Committee this year:

- **Student Mobility Research**

Significant progress has been made in recent years towards building a systematic approach to data collection and reporting on student mobility. The Council’s work on student mobility research occurred as part of the Admissions Committee Work Plan and in close partnership with the Student Transitions Project (STP).²

Admissions Committee projects with a focus on student mobility are now included in the STP Work Plan and are carried out under the auspices of the STP Steering Committee and its subcommittees, working closely with BCCAT staff and using BCCAT funding where required.

² The STP is a collaborative effort between the Ministries of Education (MEd) and Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (ALMD) and BC public post-secondary institutions to link data about students in the province’s public post-secondary and K to 12 education systems in order to answer research questions on student transitions. See www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions for information on other STP projects and reports.

Here are some examples of student mobility projects completed this year:

- *Mobility of Transfer Students*
2-page summary: bccat.ca/pubs/mobilitysummary08.pdf
8-page newsletter: bccat.bc.ca/pubs/rr_mobility08.pdf
- *Student Mobility Among Post-Secondary Institutions*
2-page summary: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/stp_highlights_nov08.pdf
Research report: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/STP-Movement-Between-Post-Secondary-Institutions-Report-2008-10-20.pdf
2-page summary: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/stp_highlights_feb09.pdf
- *ABE Student Mobility*
Research report: bccat.ca/pubs/abestudentmobility2004-05.pdf

- **Other admissions-related projects:**

BCCAT undertook an environmental scan through web-based surveys to determine if BCCAT should embark upon system-wide work to examine and recommend admissions processes and practices that will benefit students.

BCCAT conducted a survey, in partnership with the Canadian Council on Learning, of 2005/06 high school graduates who did not pursue BC public post-secondary education by Fall 2007. The purpose of the project was to determine other post-secondary destinations of students and the intentions of those who have not yet enrolled. (The full report is expected to be posted to the BCCAT website shortly.)

The following are examples of research projects completed under the supervision of the Council's Research Committee this year:

- **BC College Transfer Student Profile Reports**

- *Profile of BC College Transfer Students Admitted to Simon Fraser University, 2003/04 to 2007/08*
bccat.ca/pubs/SFUProfile0708.pdf
- *Profile of BC College Transfer Students Admitted to the University of Northern British Columbia, 2003/04 to 2007/08*
bccat.ca/pubs/UNBCProfile0708.pdf
- *Profile of BC College Transfer Students Admitted to the University of Victoria, 2003/04 to 2007/08*
bccat.ca/pubs/UVICProfile0708.pdf

- **2008 Admissions and Transfer Experiences of Students Continuing their Post-Secondary Studies in British Columbia** (prepared by BC Stats) bccat.ca/pubs/bcstats08.pdf

This report presents an assessment of student responses to an extensive set of admissions and transfer questions included in the spring 2008 Diploma, Associate Degree & Certificate Student Outcomes (DACSO) Survey of students.

C. Communications/Websites

The development and improvement of BCCAT web resources is an ongoing process. This year, a number of enhancements were made to improve the efficiency and usability of BCCAT websites. One new development was the creation of a network of institutional contacts to act as advisors regarding the Education Planner site. The Education Planner Institutional Contacts (EPIC) met in May 2008 to discuss alternative approaches to the management of the EP database. This year also saw the completion of an external review of EducationPlanner.ca. (See bccat.ca/pubs/EPReview.pdf for the full report.)

Meanwhile, BCCAT continued to work to increase awareness of BCCAT resources to inform and encourage students with their post-secondary planning. We ran two transit ad campaigns, in the spring and fall, featuring two key BCCAT websites (EducationPlanner.ca and BCTransferGuide.ca). BCCAT ads were displayed on buses in every region of BC and on the SkyTrain system, posted in trains and at selected stations throughout the Lower Mainland.

Since launching our first campaign, back in 2006, our web statistics have indicated that usership of both sites has increased significantly (10-15%) year on year. We are also very encouraged to see notably high volumes of web visits during post-secondary registration periods.

In addition to this, we also undertook a number of other advertising initiatives, participated at career and education fairs, and delivered presentations and demonstrations to assist students, counselors, and career practitioners in the use of BCCAT web resources.

D. System Collaboration

- Ministries, Agencies, Groups, and Organizations in BC**

BCCAT interacts with a number of organizations and committees serving the BC post-secondary system, on joint projects, in consultation, or in an advisory capacity, on an “as needed” basis. BCCAT also consults with Ministry staff and keeps them informed of Council activities and projects, while keeping abreast of developments within government that intersect and impact upon its work.

- Out-of-Province, National, and International Organizations**

This year, the Council continued to participate in the broader transfer context, playing a leadership role in facilitating the improvement of student-friendly policies and practices to enhance student mobility and transfer between institutions across the country. The following are examples of activities carried out in 2008-09:

- Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT):**

This year, the Council consulted with ACAT regarding the development of a policy for the inclusion of Alberta institutions in the BC Transfer System. The policy has been approved by Council, but implementation is pending until September 1, 2009 or until the development of a similar policy by ACAT, whichever comes first. The ACAT policy development is currently in process.

- Tri-Council Collaborative Initiatives:**

In September 2008, BCCAT staff members met together with members from the Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT) and the Saskatchewan Council on Admissions & Transfer (SASKCAT) to discuss areas of common interest and possible future cooperation. As a result of that meeting, a letter and report was sent by the chairs of the three councils to the advanced education ministers of the three provinces to describe collaborative initiatives agreed to by the three councils that will benefit the mobility of learners.

A very positive response to the letter and report has been received from Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology in Alberta. (These Tri-Council discussions continue to date; the most recent meeting was held in February 2009.)

- *Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT):*

PCCAT held its Third Annual Meeting in Toronto in June 2008. The meeting was co-chaired by Frank Gelin (BCCAT Executive Director & Co-Chair) and David Hinton (Registrar of the University of New Brunswick). Representatives from regions across Canada shared best practices and transfer issues arising in their own jurisdictions. BCCAT staff took a lead role in organizing the event and in overseeing the transfer of administrative support to Campus Saskatchewan. A summary of the meeting and a list of participants are available on PCCAT.ca.

BCCAT also chairs and provides secretariat support for PCCAT's Research Subcommittee, which met by telephone numerous times in 2008/09 to design a project to assess the number of students transferring between post-secondary institutions across Canadian jurisdictions, whether these students received credit for previous learning, and the success of those students. The Subcommittee prepares a proposal to CMEC for funding to coordinate the project and prepare a final report.

BCCAT will continue to play a key role on the national scene by promoting the importance of achieving a pan-Canadian system of student mobility and transfer. Our work will focus on providing advice and support to Canadian provinces who wish to develop and implement their own transfer systems and to encourage support for such activities at the Ministerial level.

4. Plan of Projects & Activities for 2009-10

Each year, BCCAT completes a comprehensive work plan comprising projects and activities arising from the prior year and reflecting revised priorities to address emerging issues. The Work Plan for 2009-10 is currently in process and will be presented to Council for consideration at the June 2009 meeting.